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The attached Report of International Women's Year has been prepared by the IWY Secretariat in response to the Secretary General's request contained in the referenced Airgram.

Unless the Mission perceives objection, the report should be forwarded to the UN Commission on the Status of Women as soon as possible.

KISSINGER

Attachment:

International Women's Year Activities,
United States of America.

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International Women's Year Activities
United States of America

U.S. Center of IWY

The first direct U.S. response to the UN proclamation designating 1975 as International Women's Year was made by an ad hoc committee of some 25 women in Federal government with responsibilities in the field of women's activities who met informally in early 1973 to discuss ways in which the U.S. Government and the private sector could implement the objectives of IWY.

As a first step the group developed the concept for a clearinghouse unit for IWY which, while receiving an initial grant from the government, would be affiliated with private foundations, and would rely on private funding. It would thus be outside the governmental system and could serve as a bridge between government and non-governmental women's organizations. In September, 1973, a grant agreement between the U.S. Government and Meridian House International in Washington, D.C. was signed for the establishment of the U.S. Center for International Women's Year. Its mandate was to spread the word about IWY as widely as possible throughout the United States and to stimulate appropriate activities by non-governmental women's organizations. It was also to act as a clearinghouse for the IWY activities

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of government agencies and private groups until a formal government Commission for IWY was authorized. The Center performed as a service unit reaching out to organizations and communities across the country, providing materials, information and suggestions so that they in turn could work together on IWY programs adjusted to their needs and resources.

A successful campaign was also conducted by the Center urging governors and mayors to issue proclamations and to create State and local IWY committees thus increasing participation in IWY activities at State and local levels.

IWY committees and coalitions of interested women and organizations at the local level became one of the strengths of the year. Their projects and programs took many forms, but all were committed to increasing awareness of IWY goals. As an outgrowth of these coalitions, many resource centers for women were established to carry on specific projects designed to improve the status and well-being of women. These women's organizations also undertook the printing and distributions of a simplified version of the World Plan of Action to women leaders, men's and women's organizations, to universities and other educational institutions.

In response to activity at the US Center, a special stamp commemorating IWY was issued in 1975 by the U.S. Postal Service. The Center helped finance its considerable outreach by selling jewelry items which reproduced the UN emblem of the IWY dove of peace. Throughout the country, the emblem came to identify one IWY worker with another.

As a result of the work of the IWY Center, thousands of women throughout the country who previously had no interest in the women's movement are now concerned. The National Commission in drafting its report (see below) has given the needs and interests of these women a high priority.

"The Percy Amendment"

A special IWY-oriented workshop, "IWY 1975 - Women in the World", was held in the Spring of 1973 as part of an annual National Foreign Policy Conference for leaders of non-governmental organizations covered by the Bureau of Public Affairs in the Department of State. One issue that generated great interest, discussion, and ultimate action centered on the need to integrate women into the national economies through the Bilateral Foreign Assistance Program. A direct

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outgrowth of this workshop was an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 (popularly known as the Percy Amendment) which called for particular attention to those programs, projects and activities which tend to integrate women into the national economies of foreign countries thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort.

The National Commission for IWY

In January 1974 President Nixon officially designated 1975 as International Women's Year and called upon Congress and the people of the U.S., government officials and interested groups to begin to provide for the observance of IWY with practical and constructive measures for the advancement of the status of women.

On January 9, 1975, President Ford issued Executive Order #11832 establishing a National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, 1975, and called upon it to plan "an agenda for the future". In April of 1975, President Ford appointed 35 women and men from the private sector with widely diverse backgrounds and experience, and two Senators appointed by the President of the Senate; and two Congresswomen appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives to serve on the Commission. They were asked to facilitate and coordinate U.S. government participation in IWY and were specifically charged to examine the conditions of life and the status of U.S. women and report their findings, with appropriate recommendations, for future government and non-government action. The life of the Commission was extended to June 30, 1976, to complete its fact finding, prepare its recommendations and file a report to the President.

At the Commission's first two meetings, over 200 non-governmental organizations concerned with the status and activities of women participated in a discussion of the specific issues on which the Commission should work. Immediately after the Mexico City Conference, the Commission, armed with a clear mandate to implement the spirit and intent of the World Plan of Action, began the work of identifying the unmet social and economic needs of women in the United States. It organized itself into the following 13 committees whose areas of concern parallel many of the target areas outlined in the World Plan of Action: Arts and Humanities, Child Development, Enforcement of the Laws, Equal Rights Amendment, Government Organization Structure, Homemaker, International Interdependence, Media, Reproductive Freedom, Special Problems

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of Women, UN-ILO Conventions, Women in Employment, Women in Power.

Committee membership included Commission members as well as participants from the private sector. All committees heard testimony from expert witnesses and some held public hearings. All meetings of the Commission and the committees were open to the public.

As a result of nearly 12 months study of women's issues, the committees drafted 115 specific recommendations, almost all of which the Commission approved and transmitted to the President of the United States. In general, these recommendations have three characteristics: 1) They are addressed to Federal or State governments or to major social institutions; 2) They are of obvious benefit to women; and 3) They are reasonably realistic and capable of being achieved. The recommendations provide the necessary specifics which will serve to enhance the status and role of women in the decade to come. Major emphasis is placed on the enforcement and/or revision of laws already in existence.

Recommendations

The World Plan of Action refers to the necessity of enactment of appropriate laws to eliminate discriminatory practices toward women. Since our particular national problems are the enforcement of existing laws and the modification of attitudes and policies that reinforce traditional stereotypes about women, the National Commission chose to concentrate its study and recommendations in the following areas:

... Greater participation of women in U.S. foreign affairs agencies and international delegations and on U.S. delegations to international Conferences.

... Labor union action to review the effect of their policies on women and to bring more women into union membership and into decision-making positions in those unions.

... Moving more women into positions of deciding public policy through election to public office and appointment to local, State and Federal boards and commissions.

... Full integration of women in business-related government activities such as extension of credit, loans to small business women, etc., as a matter of public policy.

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... Expansion of the concept of "equal pay for equal work" to "equal pay for work of equal value."

... Revision of the nation's laws so that they are based on the principle that a homemaker's contribution is equal in value to the contribution of the spouse who works outside the home.

... Rigorous enforcement by the Federal Communication Commission of non-discrimination laws in TV and radio and adoption of a suggested "ten Guidelines" on the portrayal and treatment of women by the media.

... Procedures which will give women better treatment in the arts and humanities in such areas as judging practices, salary differentials, grants by Government and foundations, and job opportunities.

... More voluntary child care programs and services to meet the needs of all working parents, regardless of income.

... Improving life for the older woman, the woman offender, women with physical and mental health problems, and women from racial and ethnic minorities.

... Revision of State divorce laws to provide for more equitable division of property, maintenance, child custody and support and enforcement of support orders.

... Combine rape and other "sexual" crimes of violence into one category of crime which applies to all such crimes regardless of the sex of the attacker or the victim; and removing requirements of corroborative evidence or the past sexual conduct of the victim in rape prosecutions.

Stating its belief that the moral decisions relating to reproduction are rightfully the responsibility of individual women, the Commission also supported the series of Supreme Court decisions guaranteeing reproductive freedom to women and condemned any interference, open or subtle, with a woman's right to control her own reproduction. The Commission also urged all branches of Federal, State and local governments to give the highest priority to compliance with these Supreme Court decisions and to make available

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all methods of family planning to women unable to take advantage of private facilities.

Equal Rights Amendment

Prompt ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment was another recommendation of the Commission. As presently interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Constitution does not provide women full equality under the law. In 1972, the U.S. Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment, which when passed, will become the 27th Amendment of the Constitution, and submitted it to the 50 State legislatures for ratification. At present, 34 States have ratified this amendment, which essentially, and with very limited exceptions, will prohibit State legislatures and the Federal Congress from enacting any law or adopting any official practices that make distinctions based on sex.

For example, under the Equal Rights Amendment, public schools could not be restricted to one sex. Women could not be restrained from holding any type of job. They would also be admitted to military services under the same standards as men.

Four more States are needed to ratify the Amendment by March, 1979. To accelerate the process, the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year helped bring together the many organizations supporting ERA to support a single organization, called ERAmerica, to coordinate their efforts and to unify the many existing ERA educational and public information programs in the country.

A Voice For the Future

Commission members were in agreement that a single mechanism which would represent the women of America and give them an effective voice in government is needed to ensure that the work of the Commission and the goals of International Women's Year are brought to fruition. After much study of alternative ways to integrate women's interests into our governmental pattern, the Commission decided to recommend legislation which would create a Cabinet level office which would be responsible for the functions of the many and scattered programs for women in the Federal government. Such a cabinet office would become the vehicle by which women will finally realize the goals of the Commission and enable women to be full and equal participants in American life.

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The full Commission Final Report, "...To Form a More Perfect Union..." Justice for American Women, will be presented to the President on June 30, 1976, and will be available to the public at that time. The main text is written in narrative style, using actual case histories to describe those clusters of problems which are the greatest barriers to equal participation of women in all aspects of U.S. life and decision-making. The largest section of the report contains the actual recommendations being made by the Commission, with background documentation which justifies the recommendations.

IWY Interdepartmental Task Force

U.S. implementation of those parts of the World Plan of Action which are relevant to our stage of national development will also be facilitated through the work of the IWY Interdepartmental Task Force, a parallel body to the Commission authorized in the same Executive Order which created a National Commission. Membership consisted of two representatives from the 50 major Federal agencies and departments whose job was to plan and implement projects within the Federal government for the domestic observance of IWY.

Agencies were asked to analyze the World Plan of Action in terms of its relevance to all on-going policies and programs. They were further asked to develop specific five-year goals for the United States as suggested in paragraph 46 of the World Plan which singles out the need for measurable achievement in such various areas as equal access to education, increased employment opportunities, increased participation of women in policy making positions at all levels.

As a first step in developing these goals, the Task Force undertook, as its principal mission, a survey of government programs to ascertain where women stand as beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries. The inspiration for this innovative approach to Federal programming came from a U.S. sponsored resolution at the Mexico City Conference which called upon the United Nations to assess its programs and activities in terms of impact on women. Each constituent agency on the Task Force was asked to examine a representative sampling of its programs in terms of their impact upon women, and if that impact was not judged to be positive, alternative programs were to be proposed.

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Much information which proved useful to the National Commission in forming its recommendations was contained in the impact evaluation reports. In addition, many positive suggestions as to where and how women's interests can be better served by government program planners was generated by the impact process.

In particular, the reports pointed up serious deficiencies in data collection and analysis in all government agencies. To correct this situation, the IWY Commission has recommended to the President that all Federal agencies be required to collect, tabulate, cross-tabulate and analyze data relating to persons by sex, ethnicity, race and where appropriate by age, income and other indicators of disadvantaged conditions.

The impact evaluation reports indicated that this special IWY effort allowed only a preliminary glimpse of a complicated array of issues relating to women which should be addressed as part of each agency's ongoing policy review.

Clearly, if long-term results are to be expected in increasing government sensitivity to women's needs, if government programs are to respond directly to those needs in the "Decade for Women" which we have entered, then the process of assessing the impact on women of various programs and delivery structures should be regularized under some mechanism of the Federal government. Consequently, the Commission has recommended to the President that the Office of Management and Budget require the departments and agencies of the Federal government to continue to consider the impact of their programs on women in the United States as part of the regular budget and review process of the government.

Signs of Progress

As a result of the activities generated by IWY, some progress can already be noted toward achieving the goal of equality between men and women:

- ... In response to a strong resolution adopted by the National Commission, the U.S. Senate ratified the Conventions on the Political Rights of Women in January, 1976.
- ... In early 1976 a series of strengthening amendments to the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974 were

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passed by the U.S. Congress.

- ... In response to a recommendation of the Commission, the Secretary of the Treasury has testified in favor of a measure which would abolish estate and gift taxes between man and wife.
- ... A move to extend social security coverage to the homemaker is gaining support in and outside the government.
- ... Evidence submitted to the IWY Interdepartmental Task Force indicates that affirmative efforts are being made by the government to bring women into the skilled trades and the non-traditional careers which have been male-dominated.
- ... The Census Bureau of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare has begun implementing a Commission recommendation that the government collect data on the economic arrangements resulting from divorce. This data will indicate the extent to which the government is involved in contributing to child support in default of parental support, especially that of fathers.
- ... The Bureau of the Census of the U.S. Department of Commerce in April, 1976, published the first comprehensive census report on women. This is a landmark step in documenting the degree to which women are integrated in the social and economic life of the country.

Adequate enforcement of laws already on the books, and modification of attitudes about women is a slow process. However, the many recommendations of the Commission if carried out, will in the long run have a profound effect on our society. The Commission has laid out a blueprint for change in all aspects of U.S. national life and decision-making. It is now up to American women to take advantage of them.

The National Women's Conference

The National Women's Conference is one vehicle for taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the IWY Commission. It is also another effective way to acquaint American women with the objectives of the World Plan of Action. Authorized

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in December, 1975, by Public Law 94-167, the conference process involves a series of State and Territorial conferences to be held throughout 1977, to be followed by a national conference no later than November 30, 1977.

The tenure of the IWY Commission has been extended to March 31, 1978, and it will be responsible for planning and structuring the conferences. It is also mandated to submit the findings and recommendations of the conferences to the President and to both Houses of Congress.

The conferences will be composed of representatives of local, State, regional and national institutions and organizations and members of the general public, with special emphasis on the representation of low-income women, members of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious groups and women of all ages. The goals of the conference will be to assess the progress that has been made to date by both the private and public sectors in promoting equality between men and women in all aspects of life in the United States; to identify the barriers that prevent women from participating fully and equally in all aspects of national life; to develop recommendations for removing these barriers and timetables for the achievement of these objectives.

The conference will give many women at the grass roots level an opportunity to examine the lives of women within the United States and to build an appreciation of the contributions women have made, are making, and can continue to make to National life.

Another goal of the conferences will need to be that of education...the sharing of information and the building of understanding on women's issues. Since not all the conference participants will be starting from the same knowledge and experience, broader issues, not necessarily resulting in immediate action must be studied. In some States, work is already in progress toward developing specific State Plans of Action, modelled on the World Plan of Action, to be presented at the State conferences for discussion and subsequent action.

The State and national conference process has the further goal of deepening an understanding of the concerns that bind women in this country to women in other nations. Such global priority issues as the production and distribution of food, the growth and distribution of population through-

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out the world, the utilization and conservation of energy and the accelerated transportation and communication of ideas and people across the face of the earth will necessarily be included on the State and national agendas of the conferences.

Each of these issues is of particular concern to women. Their views and knowledge and judgment need to be incorporated into the solutions that are developed by decision-makers.

The State and national conferences present an ideal opportunity for women to identify links between their own domestic concerns of those of a more global nature. This exploration of linkages and the meaning of interdependence will facilitate women's active participation in the structuring of a more just and human world.

If the State and national conferences do, as planned, recognize the contributions of women to U.S. development and the strengthening of world peace, identify barriers to full equality and recommend means of removing them, set up a timetable for carrying out those recommendations-- and, above all, reinforce the sense of cohesion and purpose-- then the conferences will have made a **real contribution** to improving the equality of life for all our citizens.

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